

# Some Early Memories of Pearland

## PEARLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Bi-District Champions 1941



*by Lester Hood*

Dear Chris,  
I enjoyed your web page about your father and want to share with you some childhood memories. Since I was also born in Pearland in 1923, we shared many of the same experiences while growing up in a small town.

My family lived in Friendswood during my elementary years, so that first recollection of knowing Le Roy was in Faye Brookshire's fifth grade class. He made a lasting impression on his classmates with his entertainment skills.

Front row: Eugene Johnston, David Coker, Roy Mark, Orlen O'Day,  
Second Row: Eugene Garner, Lester Hood, Nolan King, Harold D. Johnston, Ray Watson  
Third Row: Lloyd Mahaney, Warren Oblinger, Le Roy Watson, Owen Maynor, Billy Bocker, Charles Logan  
Back Row: Dan Paulk, Ray Flannery, Victor Shore, Edgar A. Lawhon, Coach Lloyd Hawkins

He was not shy about standing in front of the room and singing interminable verses of the song "There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea."

Mr. Dempsy taught us in the sixth grade. That was the year we began playing softball. Our team won the county meet by defeating Alvin in a game played in Pearland. Prior to that, we had won three games in one day in Freeport.

While in Mrs. Brigham's seventh grade class, we continued to play softball. It was in 1937 that Pearland acquired its first affiliated high school. A new building was constructed, and high school students began attending classes there rather than in Webster. The original school was converted into a gym-auditorium with a raised roof.

Since a good deal of lumber was discarded during remodeling, Le Roy and I were able to collect boards, shingles, and crate-type siding. We transported our materials on a little wagon to a vacant pasture, where we erected a clubhouse. It was probably about six by eight in size. The sides of the roof did not quite meet at a peek[sic], but we shingled it and were proud of our results. A few years later, we moved the building to a vacant lot behind my home. Denny Coppinger found an old wood-burning stove, so we had a comfortable hideout. Donald Halickbrought Satsuma oranges (which he had probably raided

form an orchard) and we enjoyed eating them while sitting on the dirt floor of our little building.

My older brothers, Bob and Claude Hood, were on the new high school basketball team. Le Roy and I wanted to watch them play in a game, but did not have the admission price of a quarter. We stood by the door looking forlorn. When Coach Hawkins entered, he said, "Aw, come on in." We were thrilled to attend a high school game.

One of the excursions Le Roy and I made was a bicycle trip to Hobby Airport, where we watched planes land and take off. I remember riding bikes with our Uncle Alan to a creek where we went swimming.

One of the best opportunities Pearland students had was the Travel Club. Most of us were from families who, during the Great Depression, could not take children to see the wonderful sights of our country. Several teachers sponsored the trips, which were managed on a shoestring budget. Each student paid about fifteen dollars for expenses. School buses were used and most gasoline was purchased with vouchers from oil companies.

The first trip we boys had was a lengthy one to Yellowstone National Park and many other parks along the route. We prepared meals ourselves. The menu was mainly cereal with condensed milk, bread with apple or peanut butter, and sometimes chili heated on a Coleman stove.

Le Roy and I were "travel mates" that year. We each carried a duffel bag containing clothes and one blanket. At night, we slept along a roadside or in a national park. We placed one blanket on the ground and use the other as a cover. One of the last stops was at Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. I recall that Le Roy was among those who got into some sort of mischief and had to run through the "belt line" as punishment.

We were privileged to attend the San Francisco World's Fair in 1939. That trip included a tour of the California redwood forests. In 1940, we traveled to the New York World's Fair. This was a country wide excursion, with five schools and five school buses involved. While in Washington D.C., our Congressman met us and a picture of the group was taken on the steps of the capitol Building. I understand that a copy of this photo is framed and hangs in the Court House at Angleton.

Most of us boys, within a very short time after these summer trips, were enlisted in various branches of the armed services and were traveling all over the country and throughout the world. The experience of having already seen at least part of the United States made the wartime moves to various camps and bases seem less forbidding. We had at least a slight acquaintance with places outside our own little village. Pearland high school girls also had trips. They were on a much smaller scale and of shorter length, since motels were used.

Life for Le Roy and the others in our class became more exciting in our junior year and senior years of high school. It was a custom for the junior class to treat the senior class to a banquet at San Jacinto Inn. In order to do this, fundraisers were necessary. The project for us as juniors was to stage a "Womanless Wedding." This was quite a comedy. I was the mother of the bride, and continually squeezed water from a handkerchief to simulate my tears. Le Roy was father of the bride. Dressed in "Beverly Hillbilly" attire, he followed the bride and groom down the aisle while carrying a real shotgun.

Besides the junior-senior banquet, those students also enjoyed a day at the beach in Galveston each spring. During senior year, our civics teacher, Mr. Ainsworth, took us to Austin while the Legislature was in session. We toured the Capitol and the Governor's Mansion, where we saw Mrs. W. Lee O'Daniel, the governor's wife. We stayed overnight in an Austin motel.

Our Pearland football team during the 1941 season was probably the best six man team in the state. Le Roy was the quarterback. While calling plays in the huddle, he sometimes told jokes and stories to loosen us up. We went through the schedule undefeated and won every game in our bracket.

A highlight of senior year included attending the Cotton Bowl Game, where Alabama and Texas A&M played. One of the mothers had knitted caps in school colors for each of us team members to wear at the game. Unfortunately, a bitter cold spell arrived on Jan. 1, 1942. None of us had warm jackets or blankets and we finally had to retreat to the car and listen to the game on the radio.

As you probably realize, the Pearl Harbor attack occurred on December 7, 1941. By the time we were about to graduate, the war was in full gear. We boys knew what we would be doing soon after graduation. Le Roy and I both held jobs with Precision Aeromotive at Hobby Airport until we left for the service.

Your Uncle Archie worked for Shell Oil Co. and located the chassis of an old wrecked Model A that Le Roy purchased for five dollars. Le Roy soon had that jalopy up and running and then up-dated to a more serviceable Model A roadster. When I broke my collarbone during football practice, Le Roy took me in that roadster to a doctor in Alvin.

I have enjoyed recollecting some of these early-life experiences which I shared with your Dad. After WW-II, I was no longer in close contact with "Red." He remained in the Air Force and I went to college and became a teacher. We did see one another at a reunion held in the mid-90s for all graduates of Pearland High School from 1938 through the war years. Then a few years later, he attended the appreciation banquet for Coach and Mrs. Hawkins. He seemed to really delight in seeing old classmates. "Red" was a dear friend. It was a privilege to grow up with him in Pearland.